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Publisher, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, S. F. HUESTIS,
3 Bleury Street, Meth. Book Room,
Montreal, Que. Halifax, N. S.

Sunday School Banner.

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TORONTO, JULY, 1893.

Lesson Study.

BY F. S. THOMPSON.

Rev. James E. W. Cook, of New London, Ohio, in an article on "The Graded Sunday-school," in the last number of the *Sunday School Times* (April 29th), says: "All honor to the men of science, who are enlarging our knowledge of things around us . . . But I assure you, their discoveries would pale like the morning star before the uprising sun, compared with the discovery of the best method of bringing the children into the measure of the stature of men in Christ Jesus."

In my last article, I spoke of Lesson Study by the Officers. Let us defer, for the time, the consideration of the subject as regards teachers and advanced scholars as well as the Home Department, now becoming so popular in some places, and take up the question of

LESSON STUDY BY THE INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS

as of the greatest importance. I do not pretend to have made any discovery of best methods, but write simply to arouse an interest and in the hope that someone who has discovered or

adopted methods which have proved successful will be induced to make them public by this means.

In our Sunday-school, we have for several years past sought to encourage the intermediate scholars to prepare their lesson at home by placing a mark to the credit of each one who reports to their teacher that they have done so. No doubt many teachers endeavor to get their scholars to study the lesson at home, and with great success; but do not the great majority of scholars everywhere come to Sunday-school without having made any preparation whatever? Aye, and advanced scholars also. Perhaps some teachers would fear too much preparation on the part of the scholars, lest they might come to the class better prepared than the teacher.

A very intelligent teacher once complained of a sermon having been preached upon the same subject that the school was to study on the afternoon of the same day, and saying that "it had taken the wind out of her sails." Why, if her whole class had been present, and everyone had paid the strictest attention to the sermon, it would have only been a help to her, because "the old, old story" cannot be repeated too often. The more a child knows about a subject beforehand, the better will be his attention in the class, and the greater will be his enjoyment of the lesson.

I asked a bright little boy, belonging to one of our largest Sunday-schools, and who was several classes in advance of the Primary Department, if he studied the Sunday-school lesson at home. He did not seem to understand what I meant, as the most he had ever done in the way of Bible study was to memorize a verse or two. Thousands of our scholars do not even do that.

If a teacher can induce a scholar to make sufficient preparation at home to say ten words intelligently upon the subject, in the class, more will have been accomplished than if that teacher had spent hours of study, and then took up the whole class hour in telling what she or he knew about it. There is too much teaching over the heads of the scholars. Nine out of every ten teachers talk too much. No wonder the scholars become restless under such instruction.

The nature and amount of the preparation would depend upon how advanced the children were. The simplest could not be less than the reading over of the lesson at home.

With regard to lesson helps, the Bible itself is the very best for both teacher and scholars. A system of study, simple though it might be, should be adopted; and a teacher, having decided upon a practical one, should endeavor to have the scholars conform to it. On Monday the lesson might be read in the authorized version; on Tuesday, in the revised version, if the scholar has a copy; on Wednesday, the references, in a Reference Bible, might be looked up;